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Building a Successful Public Relations Program:

Lee University and Dr. Patty Silverman

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Section I: Problem Statement

How does one build a successful public relations program? ✓

This research will explore elements for building a successful public relations program. For the purposes of this research, Dr. Michael Ray Smith's 9:10 a.m. Tuesday-Thursday Public Relations and Advertising Research class focused on the achievements of Dr. Patty Silverman's approach to creating a successful public relations program. Silverman founded Lee University's public relations program in 2000, following careers in public relations at the Christian Broadcasting Network and the Charlotte Police Department. At Lee University, Cleveland, Tenn., Silverman developed 11 public relations courses and founded the university's chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). The program has grown to more 120 majors in the ^{Department of} Communication Arts ~~Department~~ with 535 students. Public Relations is considered to be one of the largest majors at Lee University with 5,300 students. The university opened in 1918 and is associated with the Church of God denomination, Cleveland, Tenn.

Silverman serves as internship director for public relations and advertising majors and created "Internship Seminar" as a preparation course. In 2011 and again in 2017, she led the yearlong process of acquiring national accreditation making Lee University's public relations department the first Christian university to receive it. The Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) includes

eight rigorous standards and only 40 other universities around the globe possess this distinction.

The Cleveland Media Association awarded Silverman with the Excellence in Communication Award in 2015. She was awarded the Peer Award for Outstanding Mentor in 2013 by the Lookout chapter of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). During Silverman's time at Lee University, Public Relations has grown to the second largest major on campus. Smith choose Silverman as the subject of an in-depth interview to explore her career and garner ideas that made Lee University's program a success. In addition, the qualitative research will examine ideas that will help other public relations programs excel.

Section II: Literature Review

To have a thriving ~~Public Relations~~ program, there are specific aspects and courses which require more focus and from which all other topics stem. Public relations students should be encouraged to develop a wide array of skillsets and ways of thinking. PR is a field requiring tactical and theoretical thought along with innovative ideas. "The basic principles for excellence in effective PR are strategy, creativity, integrity and follow through" (Whiteley, 2013). Ethics is a big issue in Public Relations and student should be taught to handle tough situations with decency and composure. Incorporating these tactics of strategy, creativity, integrity and follow through into a program's curricula better prepare students for life after college.

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“In a public relations program, basic writing skills must be emphasized strongly and consistently” (Schlagheck & Hendrix, p.26). Public relations professionals use written skills for every aspect of their job. An understanding of fundamental mechanics is crucial for developing the type of writing skills necessary for careers in communication. Developing public relations writers includes first getting students to write routinely and then focusing on meticulous aspects. Intensive writing courses involving Associated Press style, spelling, grammar and punctuation prepare students for the daily requirement of writing in the field after graduation.

“Academicians and practitioners consistently regard the internship as the most crucial part of a public relations degree program” (Fulmer p.68). An internship is crucial for providing students with hands-on learning before entering their fields after graduation. Some knowledge of public relations material is necessary for receiving full benefits of an internship experience. An internship plays the biggest role in obtaining an entry-level job after college. Internships embedded into Public Relations department requirements are monitored and advised by the faculty ensuring students are prepared in the classroom for the job.

The incorporation of social media into the classroom is an important part of relevance. Developing campaigns using the top sites of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram gives students practice in reaching audiences from a professional standpoint. “Social media measurement and analysis should be a big focus” (Jacques, 2012). While learning how to optimally operate the sites is important,

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measuring how well posts are faring gives insight to what works and what needs improvement.

Section III: Methodology

Dr. Michael Ray Smith's Public Relations and Advertising Research class began conducting their research on Dr. Patty Silverman by obtaining her vita⁹, newspaper articles, speeches and other background material. They formed groups of two to four people and split the decades of her life that they would research. In William G. Squires Library at Lee University the groups used almanacs, yearbooks and other historical records to perform bibliographic research with the assistance of librarian Julie Burchfield.

vita is informal

The students then formed two to three questions based on their research. The questions were then reviewed and revised by teacher's assistant Amy Greene and Smith. Silverman then approved or denied the questions and Smith created a final list, which he gave to the students.

The class met in the TV studio to rehearse the week before the interview. Each student along with Silverman used a lapel microphone. The students shared a love seat and a plastic chair was added for larger groups. Silverman sat across from them on a chair and used props (such as a clown figurine from her job at Circus World and framed photography from the Charlotte Police Department) when applicable. The interview was filmed using a three-camera approach.

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Professor Lee Waller of Media Services created a Vimeo link containing the finished interview three days after filming. Students received the link then created a transcript of the questions and answers from the interview.

Section IV: Findings

The research for building a successful public relations program points to different aspects of PR such as writing, social media, ~~internship~~ and strategic thought, which lead to successful PR professionals in the field. Each of these dynamics were developed or incorporated into existing courses by Silverman for Lee University's public relations program.

Silverman's vita (Appendix) testifies to the amount of work and dedication it takes to build a program that is successful. The development of an internship preparation course, a chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America and an event management course are ways that make Lee University's program stand out as one of the only Christian Universities obtaining the Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR).

Many of the findings from this research put a strong focus on the need for writing courses that prepare students in the basics of spelling and grammar along with becoming comfortable using Associated Press Style. Public relations professionals use writing everyday alongside other facets of the trade. It is crucial for writing skills courses to be part of a student's major requirements in order to have a successful program.

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Appendix I

Editor's Note: The students in the Tuesday-Thursday 9:10 a.m. section of Public Relations and Advertising Research asked Dr. Patty Silverman questions in chronological order beginning with the 1960's.

Group 1. (1960's)

Julia Emerson, Mackenzie Borden, Kensington Wieland, Jess Brayboy

Introduction: I'm Julia Emerson, a senior public relations major here at Lee University. Today on March 16, 2017, the Advertising and Research class will be conducting an in-depth interview with Dr. Patty Silverman, a professor of public relations. Before we begin I am going to read a little bit about her background. Dr. Silverman began her teaching career at Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., in 2000. Since then, she has led the program to nearly double its size with help and grow it to nearly 120 public relation majors. In July Dr. Silverman will begin retirement. Today public relations and advertising In-Depth Interview: Dr. Patty Silverman students will be asking her about her career, her reaction to seminal news events and her career including her outstanding work at Lee University. Students will work in teams and walk Dr. Silverman through the decades of her life. I will begin with the 1960s and pose a question about a tense time in U.S. history, particularly the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Do you recall any specific memories from this event in your childhood?

Yes I do, as a matter of fact my memories were hiding under a desk. Because I lived in Daytona Beach at the time and we had to run drills and where we had to pretend like there was a missile crisis coming our way and all of the students had to get under their desks so, I remember that very clearly.

I am Kensington Wieland and I am interested in how your family influenced your education?

You know, I don't remember them pushing the idea of college, but I know it was important. My Dad completed college, my mother had a couple years of college. But the one thing I do remember, is that my Mother, who was a stay-at-home-mom, went back to work to pay for my college education, so I know that it was very very important to them.

In our world today where news is at our fingertips, how did you and your family receive the news in the 1960's?

Well, in the 1960's believe it or not, the tv had not been out that long, but I can remember we're sitting in front of the tv, watching Walter Cronkite deliver the news, and sitting there with my parents. As a matter of fact, that's the way I still receive my news today. As I got older, I remember my parents getting the newspaper every single day and they read the newspaper, so I'm still old fashioned. I don't get a newspaper everyday, I do check the news on my phone, but I do like to sit down in front of the television and watch the news every night.

I am Jess Brayboy and I understand that the 1960's was a time of racial strife. Do you have any memories of racial inequality during this period of history?

Well, I was pretty young during the 60's but I do very clearly remember the separation of bathrooms with colored and white and also with water fountains as well. But I do remember as I got older and our schools became integrated. I do remember that happening. As I said when it all started, the protest and all that I was pretty young so my memories are memories that I see now recalling those times. But I do remember the division very clearly.

What was the best part of growing up in Florida?

Well the first question, or uhm, the first answer that one would naturally state would be the beaches {laughs} and the beaches, or the seafood but I think for me my family was there. My mother was born and raised in Florida, uhm and, I think just having family around we just have so many wonderful family memories of being on the beach, and uhm doing family ya know events, {smiles}, so I think that was the best thing.

I'm Mackenzie Borden and I'd like to ask you if you had any experiences growing up that impacted your understanding of public relations as an adolescent?

Well I think it was the day that I got up on stage and I sang how much is that doggy in the window the one with the waggly tail and I loved being in the limelight. And as you know as public relations professionals we have to get up in front and represent our organizations. I also was very relational. I had a lot of friends I didn't tend to just have a little cohort of friends but I made sure to have relationships with a lot of different people and because we're in the relationship business I think early on I was probably primed and ready just my pers my natural personality to be in public relations but I didn't really understand that at the time.

As you know man first walked on the moon on July 20, 1969, where were you on that day and what kind of impact did that have on you and the people around you?

Well it was really interesting it was the only, living in Florida, it was the only launch that I attended and it happened to be that one and I remember sitting in the stands and I could see President Nixon. So that was pretty mem, pretty, quite a memory for me being there to see it happen but the other thing I remembered thinking and maybe this is where the PR was coming in to play is I thought I wonder what the first words are going to be when he steps on the ground on the moon because that will be in history and I remembered I waited and I remember watching it and I heard those first steps small step for man big step for mankind and I thought it was really cool that I got to hear those first words and I think as a public relations professional now I understand why hearing those words were such very strong to me.

Group 2. (1970's-1980's)

Jake Molony, Chloe Grabeman, Carrie Beavers

I am Jake Molony and we will be asking you questions about the 70s and 80s. I would like to know more about career as a physical education teacher before you become a university professor.

Well that's something I always say. I went from PE to PR, it's kind of a long journey but I'll try to make it short. I was very athletic growing up and so I just made the assumption that I would be a PE teacher the rest of my life. I tried it for year and decided that that was not the career route for me. And what happened from there was I took a job working for the recreation department in Lakeland, Florida and part of my job was doing all the promotion for the departments so I had to work with the media make brochures, set up events, a lot of the things you do in public relations. And I really realized I like that part of my job better and that's kind of where I first began thinking about public relations. That's how the transition happened.

Would you tell us about your experience as the public relations coordinator when you worked in Orlando?

Are you talking about when I worked at Circus World?

Yes ma'am.

That was my first full time PR job and I had already made the decision that I wanted, when I left the recreation department, my next full time job to be in public relations. And so I heard about this job, I applied for it, I really thought it was a longshot because my education certainly wasn't in communications and somebody gave me a chance and so I did publicity and promotion with the news media. It was an amazing job. It was, in fact let (pulls out clown statue) me show you, and it's rather interesting because it was owned by Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus and as you know, the circus is closed down but when I left the marketing and PR team they gave me this, it's a Ron Lee clown, it's one of a kind, they are very very expensive and they signed it on the back and so this is something that I really cherish because this was my first PR job and I got to work with not only clowns, but I also got to work with baby tigers and elephants and performers. It was an amazing job, I loved it.

I am Chloe Grabeman and I am interested in, also, your experience at Circus World and becoming a believer while working there. What was going on in your life that attracted you to Christianity especially in that setting?

Well, I'm not sure if there was anything going on in my life at the moment, but there had had been a lot of things that had happened prior to that that I'm not proud of, my life had gotten out of line and I really believe there was a gentleman that was hired to be my boss. He came, his name was Larry, and he was a Christian. He said "praise the Lord" all the time, he was happy all the time, he had this peace about him and I knew that there was something different. And I started talking to him about it and he suggested a church that I attend. I went into the church, and I grew up in church but I never really had a

relationship with the Lord, and when I walked in there, I'll never forget it because everybody was singing and they were hugging me and I went, "Oh my gosh these are those Holy roller churches they talk about." But I loved it and I couldn't wait to go back because the people were really excited about the Lord and that's just where it happened. And I really believe that it was him (Larry) coming, and he was only there for a year, and I was doing PR and my best friend was doing advertising, and she and I both became saved during that time. It was a pretty cool experience.

And you also worked for the Charlotte Police Department. Do you think that work help hone your skills in PR and crisis communication?

Absolutely. In the police department you deal in crisis everyday. Somebody's shooting somebody, there's a domestic violence there's terrible accident. Yes, I got a lot of my crisis training at the police department, because unfortunately, what my department, we handled the press, we were talking about what was going on at the police department and it definitely taught me how to deal in crisis situations. And there was a lot off things that were very sad but it gave me the opportunity to really promote the police department. (Holds up plaque) I just happened to have, this is a police badge at the time (points to badge). This is the building where I worked (points to the building). And right in front of the building, they gave me this when I left because I worked there about seven years, and right in front of this building we had memorial services for officers killed in the line of duty. So there was a lot of sad things, but there was also some really wonderful things that I got to do while I was there (puts plaque down).

Ok, I'm Carrie Cheeks and I'll be talking to you about your experience at Circus World and Walt Disney World, which job came first and what are the similarities and differences?

Well obviously, Florida is the tourism capital. And I remember hearing that there was going to be a (air quotes) Disney Land, is what I thought, coming to Orlando. Well, Orlando at the time was nothing and I thought it was just a rumor. I couldn't believe that would possibly be happening within thirty minutes of where I lived. But it happened and what happened then was all of the, and I did have a job there one summer which lasted for two weeks, I was a swan boat driver and I had to greet everybody "Welcome to the swan boat ride just be sure to keep your hands inside." and after doing that for two weeks I decided this is not really a good career move for me. But later on after I graduated from college I could not get a teaching job, and they were opening Lake Buena Vista Village which is now Downtown Disney, and they were hiring like crazy. So I got a job there in sales and I loved that and I ended up staying there for about two and a half, three years. And the thing about that, this was my first big career move, and I want you guys to listen to this, never think you're too young to come up with some ideas that people aren't gonna listen to. Because I realized there was a void where we were compared to all the employees at Walt Disney World because we were kind of far away from them. So I approach someone, an administrator and I said you know what we need to have this position here and I'm the one that can do it and guess what they did it and they hired me. And so I did training, I was in charge of recreation activities for the employees, it was a wonderful job and that was my first big career move that I did in my early twenties so

that was my role there. And then at Disney or at Circus World that came later on but Circus World, when Disney came and they kept adding and adding and adding, none of the smaller theme parks could really survive very well because Disney just had it all and so Circus World eventually closed down after I left but I saw the writing on the wall I knew was gonna happen.

Ok and you honed skills from Circus World and other organizations and what was the biggest change from corporate PR to Law Enforcement PR with the Charlotte Police Department?

Oh wow! I felt like I had stepped into a new world, I really did. First of all, police officers are not very trusting, you have to become a part of their family. And it took a while for them to really trust me as an outsider. I didn't carry a gun because I was a civilian and they were sworn, but it took me a long time for them to trust that I had their best interest in mind. Because you can imagine all they see is the terrible people of the world and they just don't trust a lot of people. So first of all there was that. Then there was understanding all the law-enforcement lingo and then there was seeing horrible things that I got to see in my city of Charlotte happen every day and so that was, it was a huge learning curve for me and that was very difficult but once I got the trust and once I was accepted into the law-enforcement family it was a wonderful experience I loved my time in Law Enforcement.

Group 3. (1990's)

Maggie Glover, Madison Penrose, John David Clark

My name is John David Clark and we are going to be asking you a few questions questions about the the nineteen nineties. To start off, I have a quick question. What was the biggest difference between working in the Charlotte Police Department and the Christian Broadcasting Network?

Oh Gee, There's a lot of differences. Working in law enforcement and then working for christian organization there were so many differences. As far as the work that I did was similar. I mean there were still working with the media, communication, doing newsletters. The tasks that I did were the same but the environment was very different. Obviously in law enforcement you had to deal with quite a bit of negative news most the time, but my, I tried to always incorporate the positive as well in the police department. And so what would come, what would happen in the police department would be things that were happening out there in our community. At CBN, the focus was totally different. I knew almost everyone that I worked with were christians so the environment was very different. And then our mission was to share the gospel, to go out and help the needy, to give healthcare, to provide christian conferences so the focuses were very different but the tasked I did were very similar.

The environments, as you were saying were very different, so the transition, I am assuming, was a very, a very interesting transition, if you could go back and give yourself a piece of advice what would that be?

A piece of advice about transitioning or just about work in general?

In general.

Wow, well first of all I think I would have, being where you are now as students, I would have been a little more serious about my education. Now I would admit it, I was away from home, left florida and went to North Carolina near brevard where you are from, and I was so excited about being away from my parents that I was more focused on the personal things going on then probably the academic. Don't do that because I really did not discover my gifts and talents were at that time. I wish we had strengthsfinders like you guys have here because when you look at mine, public relations was exactly where I needed to be but I did not know that at the time. So I just chose public, PE because I felt like that's what I liked. So my advice would be when you're getting that education, this is the place to find out what your calling is, what your vocation is, how you can use your strengths and talents for the lord and so that's a piece of advice I would have given myself. Be serious about your undergraduate. Figure out there where you want to go from there.

I am Maggie Glover. In your season at Christian Broadcasting Network, what was the most difficult crisis you face?

I worked for Pat Robertson, a very controversial founder and leader of the Christian Broadcasting Network. He was very vocal on what he believed as a Christian and because of that, he received a lot of personal attacks from the media because of misunderstanding of the christian faith. I spent most of my time dealing with the negative media, instead of promoting the great things that CBN did. One of the most challenging things we had to deal with was when we had protestors. First of all, we had a gay minister from Texas, who knew Pat Robertson and wanted to debate the issues of homosexuality. Pat did not want to debate him. They had differences in how they believed, but he still didn't want to debate. The gay minister kept coming back, even when we told him not to, and he ended up getting arrested and sent to jail. While in jail, he fasted for several weeks. Protesters swarmed the outside of the CBN offices, so we had to handle several issues that involved making sure protestors were on public property and not our property. It was an intense time, and what happened next was interesting. The man was fasting for so long that he began to get very sick. Pat Robertson went and dropped the charges because his (the gay minister's) parents were supporters of CBN and they requested that he would drop them. Pat Robertson had a press conference outside our building after the charges were dropped, where he discussed our organization and again, it was a very negative time. I was also right in the middle of trying to figure out what messages to form for the public on communicating differences in opinion, how to have voices heard and also try to avoid so much controversy. It was a tough crisis.

What was the most rewarding experience while you were there?

There were several rewarding experiences. Pat Robertson founded many organizations. Not only did he found the Christian Broadcasting Network, but also Operation Blessing, Regent University and more. One of the best things we did was take an L-1011 airplane

and convert it into a flying hospital. This gave me the opportunity to go into countries and take free medical care to people. My job was to meet with the press and set up events associated with the travelling hospital. The most rewarding part happened at 2 am, when people would line up outside the plane, waiting to be treated. People would come for basic medical care, get treated and after that, we got to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

The second most rewarding experience was when we launched the largest Bible reading campaign in America. It was launched from New York City, and I was able to handle the media and set up the events associated with the launch. Our research said people were not reading the Bible, and this was because people did not understand it well; thus, we made it known through promotion. We decided then to promote a new version of the Bible that was easy to understand. This was very successful.

I am Madison Penrose and I'd like to revisit the police department and the topic of crises, what would you say was the best and worst thing that you encountered at the police department?

Well, I want to end on a positive, so I'll start with the worst. It was three o'clock in the morning, and I carried a pager, I had to carry a pager because we didn't have cell phones at the time, we had to carry the pager for emergencies. And the pager went off, and I was told to get into the Police Department, I had only been there probably less than 3 months, I was still adjusting, and that a police officer had been killed. No, actually they said a police officer had been shot and I did not know that he had died until I walked into the enforcement station. That happened three times. Those were the worst moments, I'll never forget walking in and just sensing and feeling, remember I told you about how we were a family, sensing the family loss. And we had found out that it was a traffic stop, he was stopping somebody and the guy pulled out a gun and shot him and killed him. Very young, like in his early 20's. And those were the worst of times, and I happened as I said three times, and the last police officer that was killed in the line of duty was a friend of mine. So, those were the most difficult times. And because of those, I really try to figure out my role, how do I promote the police department positively? How do I let people know that these are the kinds of things they have to deal with everyday? And so, putting on National Police Week, doing things like putting teddy bears in their cars so that they can give them to children that are traumatized, getting vests for them through Domino's pizza who gave money so that our police officers could have protective vests. Those were some of the projects that I got to work on, but I think one that really stands out to me, was there was someone who had stolen some diapers, not the whole bag, but just some diapers from the store and was arrested, and we found out that they did that because their children didn't have enough food, didn't have enough diapers, and we found out, what happened was amazing, people heard the story, found out why they did that and all of a sudden my office was full of clothing and diapers and food and the community just rallied around this family and came forward, and we were able to provide some things for this family that was a need. And I just remember that was such an exciting time. This was our police department and our community coming together to support one family, who the only reason they stole it was because their children didn't have diapers. And so those are kind of some of the really great things that happened, that I recalled being very positive.

What would you say was helpful in the classroom that your PR career and experiences aided in?

Well I think I shared some of those experiences already, having gone through death of police officers, arrests, I remember being helicoptered into a really terrible traffic accident involving some of our police officers on the interstate, drug busts where we took the media in. There were so many situations, first of all in law enforcement and that makes sense, but really at CBN I had to deal with a lot of negative press, international media, I was dealing with the big media all the time and as a matter of fact when I left CBN, Pat Robertson said “well you’ve got some good case studies to use in your classes,” and I said “I sure do!” I think the training I received, both in law enforcement and at CBN which was about 13 years, where I had to deal with crisis situations really prepared me to come in and say, “I can tell you what works and what doesn’t work because I’ve been there.” So I would say that those kinds of experiences really helped me develop a crisis communications class and that’s one of my favorites to teach.

Well I would definitely say one of your strengths would be connecting with your students on a personal level. Do you think that came from all the connecting you had with people in both of those experiences?

Hopefully that’s just what my parents taught me to do was to put people first. I definitely had opportunities to see people at their worst, but also to see people at their best so I’m sure that had an impact on how I treated others because I did have a job where I saw people at their worst and not everybody gets that opportunity. Going into other countries and seeing people that can’t even afford dental care, that don’t have the money to do that. I think anytime you find yourself in those kinds of situations, it certainly does sensitize you to other people.

Group 4. (2000-2010)

Emily Martin, Jake Sexton, Savannah Stone

Hi I am Jake Sexton and we are going to talk to you, or ask some questions, about the early 2000s. “Ok.” So, to begin with, I was wondering if you could tell me about the process of coming to Lee and how you got the job.

Oh wow. That was really amazing. I had been working the PR profession for about 20 years and my last job at CBN became extremely stressful, and I just decided I had kind of reached my goal of being director of the department and I just needed a break. I wasn’t really sure what I was gonna do next but I felt like I just needed a break, so I took a break. And about a week later, my dad had a major stroke. And so I was able to help take care of him so it was definitely some God-timing going on there, and so after I took care of him and was helping out for a while, I thought, ‘Gee, I guess I better get a job,’ and so I knew I had a Master’s degree, I got my Master’s at Regent University, really didn’t get a Master’s with the idea of teaching, I got it because I wanted to be promoted and move up the rank in Pr. So I thought, ‘Well, I had this Master’s so I guess I could just teach part-time to fill my time,’ so I got a job at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA and I

taught Public Speaking, Principles of PR, and I think I taught one other class and, Jake, it was like I walked into the classroom and started talking to students and it wasn't very long before I realized how much I love that. Especially in the PR class, because I was able to share my experiences, and students actually were interested, unlike my one year P.E. day where it was all Junior and Senior girls that were just, you know, didn't want to work out or take their showers and all they thought about was boys and didn't really care. These were students that really cared and were passionate and I got so excited those two semesters, I just fell in love with my students and the idea of teaching and I thought, 'Oh how cool is this? Maybe, Maybe I could do this full time.' And I didn't quite know how to do that or go about that process, I really didn't know anything about Lee. I think I read one article about the fire one time, but I didn't really know much about it and so I started going back to my faculty at Regent and I said, 'You know, I think I'd really love to teach at a Christian University, wouldn't that be cool?' And so I contacted my old advisor and he put me in touch with somebody here. And that was Dr. Melton. He was chair of our department at the time. He's now our Dean, and so I just shot him an email, 'I don't think you know me, but I've been teaching at Old Dominion and I think I'd really like to teach in a Christian environment.' And I got an email back very quickly and he said, 'Well this is really interesting that you would email me. I just, we are in the process of getting approved the first PR professor position and I had a list of people that I wanted I wanted to contact. And it was a list of one and you were the name on the list.' Now, if that's not a God-thing, I don't know what is. So everything after that, I walked onto this campus, fell in love with it just being here, um, and that's history. They hired me as the first PR professor and I've been here 17 years.

So, what was your first day like on the job?

Ya'll pay attention to this. My first day, I was late. Very bad impression. The first day, we had to meet with our mentors. We're given a faculty mentor and we just met for breakfast and I had to admit though, I had a good reason for being late. I was actually living in Chattanooga with my dad, who was still recovering from his stroke, and my stepmother, who was very sick. And I was kind of caretaking them and traveling back and forth from Chattanooga and my husband was still in Virginia so it was not the best circumstances and I was ready to go out the door, I knew how long it took to get here, gonna be on time, and I had to take care of one of my parents. AND so, I was late, I didn't know where we were meeting, I got that confused. I was the last person to walk in. So you can imagine how I felt. Here I am, teach-telling you guys, 'Don't be late, it's so important,' always was on time at work and my first day at Lee I was late. Not a good first day. But, I think that was kind of my first day/week because we go through faculty meetings. My first day in the classroom, I was petrified. But, not long after being there, I just sort of relaxed and realized that I can do this. It was scary because academics, it was kind of like walking into the law enforcement job, it was such a different environment, and coming here, I mean there's academic language I didn't understand. It was just a whole new environment. I was around all these people with PhD's, feeling really stupid, I thought they were sizing me up and they weren't gonna like me and all these things are going around in my head like, 'How am I gonna do this, my family's back in Virginia,' and you know, God had it. And it all worked out.

I'm Emily Martin and I kind of want to change directions a little bit.

Ok.

Most all of us remember the tragedy of 9/11 in 2001, I was just wondering, where were you when that happened, and how, if at all, did that impact you?

I remember that day completely. I remember I was teaching, we were in the Dixon Center, the Communication Arts department was in the Dixon Center at the time. I remember I was teaching a class across the hall from my office, where our offices were. And I stepped out for some reason, and our secretary at the time, Suzy Battle said, "There's a plane that just crashed into one of the towers in New York." And I thought, "Oh, how horrible." I'm thinking, it's just an accident. Went back in, finished teaching my class, came back in and she said, "There's been a second one." And I went, "What?" And at that moment, it hit me, this is not an accident. And I remember that, at the time, the video production department was upstairs, and they had the TV on. And so I ran upstairs and I sat up there with Jeff Sawyer and some others in the video department. And I sat there and watched the second building fall. And I'll never forget realizing I was visualizing that as it was happening. And just the impact that, that had on me. For the rest of the day, we all weren't quite sure how to handle this as a university, and so what happened, we set up screens in Dixon Center and allowed students to come and go as they wanted and watch the coverage, because the coverage was going all day long obviously. I went in there for a little bit and watched it. We were told that we could have class if we wanted, we could cancel if we wanted. We weren't quite sure how the students were going to respond. And so, it was just a very difficult day. But I think beyond that, it was an ongoing thing. And I remember that, something I would've done differently, is that I tended to sit in front of the TV every night and watch it. And I needed to not do that, a lot of people did that. It was just such a huge event that none of us thought would happen that you just, it's like you're just glued to the TV, you just can't believe what's going on. And then you had everybody out there searching for survivors, and there was the posters with people looking for their family members. I mean, on and on and on. So, yes, I very, very really remember that day.

To transition from one of the darkest hours probably in the early two thousands, I'd love to talk to you about one of the brightest for you in the early two thousands as well. So as I'm sure you remember, you were featured in the 2005 Vindagua for the adoption of your daughter Bethany, and for the pursuit of your Ph.D. And so we were wondering, during such a busy season, why did you choose to adopt then? Why then, and why Bethany?

That was a difficult time, and I don't think anybody in their sane mind would be trying to work on a Ph. D, working full-time, travelling back and forth to Knoxville, adopting, not a baby, but a thirteen-year-old female. Why would I do that? All I can think is that I must have been having an out of body experience. I'm not really sure. But that's not the truth. The truth is my husband and I couldn't have children, and we had kind of given up on that idea, and one day I read in the newspaper about an adoption fair, or an adoption. If

you want to adopt come to this meeting. I just, it was one of those things where I read it and it was that night. It was in Chattanooga, and I told my husband, I said, "I don't know why, but I think we're supposed to go to that," and so we did. So we started hearing about it, and we went through the program you have to go through to be foster parents. You have to through a program. We knew we didn't want to foster, but we still had to go through that. So we went through the process, and then they had an adoption fair where they had parents who wanted to adopt and children who were waiting to be adopted - a picnic. Bethany and I met there. I remember we played egg toss, we were cutting pumpkins, and we just really connected. Found out though, that she wasn't up for adoption yet, so I was a little bit upset about that, but I think it was about a year later that she was coming up for adoption, and this whole process, God was in the middle of it because her care, the gal that was in charge of her caseworker was a strong Christian, and she knew that Bethany needed to be in our home. She knew that I was a teacher. She knew Bethany was smart. She knew that she could go on to go to college. She was fighting for her. She fought for her to be in our home, and we prayed about it, and we said to God, "We don't know what child is going to fit, what is going to work, but we trust you." And we just said, "God whatever you want." It's kind of a weird situation, but basically in a room there is caseworkers debating each other about which children should go in each home, and so that was going on. And at the end of the day we got a call and said, "Well, Bethany has been selected to go to your home." So we were thrilled. And, you know, yes, it was horrible time. Yes, nobody in their right mind should have done it then, but the thing is, I trusted God, and we had asked for a child, we knew we had wanted an older child because we were older, and God had matched her in our home and so we knew that's what we needed to do. And the journey, she'll tell you this, Bethany is now a PR major here at Lee, going to graduate in December. So proud of her. There are statistics that I just looked up not too long ago, that only three percent of kids that have been in foster care, and she was in foster care a long time, only three percent graduate from college. And so in December, when she walks across that stage, she's gonna be a very small percentage of, you know, kids that have done this. So I'm very proud of her.

You should be. Thank you.

Group 5. (2010-Present)

Tanner Smith, Kiley Brock, Virginia Lentz, Grace Green

I am Tanner Smith. Can you share a fun experience that occurred in the classroom?

Oh yes I've had many, but I think one that was probably more of a fun experience for the student, well, it was fun for me too, it was my principles of PR class and we were doing a case study about FedEx was bringing the penguins back from California. They were, after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, they had to transmit some of the animals to different parts of the country while they rebuilt their aquarium. Well the penguins were shipped to California, San Diego. So FedEx had this huge campaign of transporting the penguins back to New Orleans. It was a really big deal and they received a silver anvil award which is kind of like the Oscars for PR and we were talking about that case study in class. So on the last day when I was going to reveal to them they had to kind of look at this case study and figure out what they would have done. But at the last reveal day, I

wanted to reveal what happened and how it happened. I got a penguin suit and I wore it into the classroom. And so *unbenounced to students I come waddling in, in my penguin suit and I knew there were a lot of cameras out, so it's out there in social media land somewhere but I think that was a lot of fun that day.

Looking back, would you have ever envisioned that the public relations major would double in size?

Probably not, I'm not really sure what I thought. I wasn't looking for quantity. I was looking for quality. And I know I sort of had an advantage because I was the first PR professor and I was able to sort of create and design and figure out what is going to be the best program for our students. And so it was really more about that. Are you guys going to come out of the program competitive and learning things that are going to help you in your careers? And that was really more of my focus than the numbers but yeah, seeing that we had somewhere around 60 or 70 and now we're probably 125, I'm surprised at that but I am excited that that many students are interested and that we have a reputation of a good program. But I don't think I ever really thought about it.

When coming up with cross-cultural trip ideas, what drew you to the following countries Portugal and England, Germany and Austria, Buenos Aires Argentina?

Well, obviously they would be places that I wanted to go, if I'm honest, but also I worked with a travel agency. It was a family owned travel agency and we discussed places, and I needed to go to larger cities that had like PR firms, they had big corporations where our students could visit and talk to the communications people at those organizations. So I really worked with them to discuss what would be some good places to take students where they could really get that good public relations, communications experience. So it's really mostly based on that, plus places I wanted to visit.

I'm Kiley Brock and I'd like to know if you could create any class, what would it be?

Well, I really feel like I've developed all of them that I wanted to. I created 11 since I've been here and I think the one that, my most recent one was Christianity in public relations and that one is one that I taught just this, well I taught it in the fall and now in the spring and that is a great one to end on because it sort of brings the students back, I mean you guys take Bible classes and talk about that and then in between there you are doing all your PR skills and application classes but what this class does is it says 'ok you've got all this now, it's not about what you can do but who you're going to be.' And so this class, I love it because I get to talk to students about 'ok you're getting ready to go out there who are you going to be? How are you going to be different? How are you going to respond with integrity and ethics in a world that doesn't always promote that?' So, it's really an opportunity to kind of come back and talk to the students about their faith and about their foundation and really just to prepare you guys to say 'get ready, every place isn't like Lee, and let's talk about our foundation.' For example, I have students just write their personal code of ethics and write their theology for life. Because I want you guys to really be thinking about that. You got the tools now, but they're not any good if you go

out there and don't use them ethically. And so I love this class because it's really an opportunity to kind of talk about, really talk about faith all the time and that's not something I've been able to do and so I think ending on that class, since I'm retiring I'm really not going to develop anything else but I think that's a good one to end on.

So, would you say that is your favorite class, or out of the 11 you created do you have a favorite class and why?

Gosh, I've loved something about all of them and it's really funny is, I've moved along and I've developed a new class and I go, 'oh this is my favorite' and then I develop another one 'oh this is my favorite,' but now looking back, this one is definitely because it's real personal, I mean, it's about the students and I tell them that the first day of class. 'This is the first class that is about you, just about you and who you are going to be.' But the other one I love is crisis communication because that's where I got a lot of my training working in law enforcement, working at CBN, some people are just kind of wired when you are in a middle of a crisis you just thrive and that's how I'm wired, it's kind of weird but it is. And so, I love to take the students to a crisis drill or to visit the emergency medical or emergency management organization or take them to centers for disease control and see how people handle that. I love that kind of stuff and so I probably would say that one and it might be my favorite because I feel the most qualified to teach that, that's just what I did for 12 years was crisis communication so I guess that one would go to the top.

I'm Virginia Lentz and I'd just like to know what was one the most rewarding moments you've had with students?

There's really not one. Everyday I'm in the classroom there's a rewarding moment, but I think the moments that are the best for me is when I have students in my office and I'm advising them and I get to pray for them. You know, you have a thought that you're gonna come in and teach all this great knowledge to these students and everything, but what I very quickly discovered was that I learned from them. I had a student yesterday that set up an advising appointment, she's graduating she didn't need one, but she said 'I just wanted to come in and talk to you before you leave' and she asked me if she could pray for me and that just ministered so much. I have a stack probably this big in a file that just says personal, and in there are cards, emails, gifts, presents that students over the years have given me just to say thanks. And so I couldn't pick a favorite one, there's just too many. That's, when I retire, I'm not gonna miss getting up early I'm not gonna miss doing the grading, if I could just teach and not grade I'll be happy (laughter). I'm not gonna miss the you know advising 60 students, and the heavy load that we have as faculty, I'm not going to miss that, but I am going to miss you guys. You know, that's why I was called here, I know that, and so that's the hardest part.

In 2015, you received the Cleveland Media Association's Excellence Award, but it was also on the birthday of your deceased mother, what was that day like for you?

Oh you're going to give me all the ones that I cry to, (laughter) thank you Virginia! Yeah I received, my mother had died that year in August, and on December the 4th, which is

her birthday-would have been her birthday, the Cleveland Media Association gave me that award, they give one award a year, and I think two things: first of all to have you peers recognize you for what you just do, you know, for your career was quite an honor, but to know that it was on my mom's birthday it was bitter-sweet. It was celebrating her, but at the same time I just I know that if she was alive she would have been there, and so it was hard to not have her there, you know, for that special occasion in my life.

I am Grace Green. We have asked you lots of questions. Is there something that you would like to tell us that we missed?

Wow. Well, it is really difficult to sit here and I feel like this is all about me and I really don't like that. So, I want to talk about not me, but to say that what has been accomplished could not have been accomplished if I was not at Lee. Lee is a great environment. It's a great place where you are supported; where you're encouraged to try new things. I mean, developing eleven classes and nobody said, "No, you're crazy"? I just felt like the faculty and the administration and this University was a place that said, "Here, do what you think you need to do for the students." And for that I am so grateful. This is really a great University. It's a great place to grow. It's a great place to develop things. It's a great place to make mistakes because people are forgiving. And I would say for you guys, as students, that you need to see that as well. This is a safe place. It's okay to mess up because there's going to be people that might give you a swift kick one minute but they'll hug you the next. It's a place to grow in who you are and figure out what God wants you to be. And it's a great place to learn your gifts and talents that God has for each of you and go out and do something great for Him. I really did not use my undergraduate time wisely. I didn't figure out who I wanted to be until later on in life and so, I would just say do that for yourselves. Figure it out now. You may make changes along the way and that's perfectly fine. But figure out who it is that God wants you to be. He's given all of you great gifts and talents. And figure out what you want to be and go for it. I guess that would be it and that I'm very grateful that I'm in a place-this is the longest I've been in any job because I did love it so much. And I felt I could do what I needed to do to make the program good for you guys. So, I'm very, very, grateful for that.

On behalf of the research students, we thank you for participating in this interview today.

Curriculum & Professional Vitae Patricia R. Silverman, Ph.D., APR

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EDUCATION**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**

Knoxville, TN

Ph.D. in Communication

REGENT UNIVERSITY

Virginia Beach, VA

MA in Journalism (Major Emphasis - Public Relations)

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Cullowhee, NC

BS in Education

**ACADEMIC &
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE****LEE UNIVERSITY**

Cleveland, TN

Professor of Public Relations

August 2000 to Present

Department of Communication Arts**Academic Accomplishments**

- Responsible for the development and coordination of the public relations curriculum.
- Developed 11 new courses for the public relations program.
- Developed a public relations major in Fall 2008.
- Developed a public relations minor in Spring 2010.
- Advise approximately 55 public relations students.
- Internship director for all advertising and public relations majors.
- Revised the internship program to include an Internship Seminar preparation class.
- Led the yearlong process to acquire national accreditation for Lee's public relations program called CEPR (Certification in Education for Public Relations). Lee was the first Christian University to receive CEPR and one of approximately 40 universities international with the accreditation (Fall 2011). Program received recertification in 2017.

Service to the University

- Founder and faculty advisor of the Lee University Chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). (2001)
- Led the first PRSSA Bateman team to the finals placing 4th out of approximately 60 universities competing in this national public relations student competition. Led another three teams to honorable mentions.
- Coached senior public relations majors to prepare for a Beta Exam sponsored through the national Public Relations Society of America. Lee was one of approximately 10 universities nationwide asked to participate in the testing of this exam for a new entry level student accreditation called P-APR (Principles-Accreditation in Public Relations)
- Served on Guest Relations Committee for Celebration 2000.
- Committee service including: Campus Events, Spiritual Life Council, Fine Arts, Strengths Vocational Advisor, Lee's Speakers Bureau, United Way Steering Committee, Faculty Search Committees, Faculty Mentor, Committee on Rank (4 yrs, chair one year), Communication Arts Building Committee.
- Serve as Discipline Coordinator for public relations major (2008-present).
- Planned four cross-cultural trips for communication and public relations majors: Portugal and England (2009), two trips to Germany & Austria (2011 & 2013) and Buenos Aires,

- Argentina (2016)
- Recruitment of numerous part-time faculty members to assist in the teaching of public relations classes.

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
Adjunct Instructor
Department of Communication & Theatre Arts

Norfolk, VA
 August 1999 to May 2000

- Taught public relations and public speaking courses as a part-time faculty member in the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts.

CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING NETWORK (CBN)
Public Relations Director
Media Relations Manager

Virginia Beach, VA
 July 1997 to June 1999
 January 1994 to July 1997

- Provided leadership, strategy, goals and organization for the public relations division in the areas of media relations, public information, special events, guest services, publications, crisis management, community relations and reputation management.
- Supervised staff of seven employees and oversaw a budget of \$300,000.
- Served as CBN's primary spokesperson in matters relating to the public and news media and as the only media spokesperson for the founder and chairman of CBN, Pat Robertson.
- Facilitated national and international interviews with news media organizations including *Larry King Live*, *60 Minutes*, *NBC World News Tonight*, *New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *Washington Post*, etc.
- Developed mission statement and goals for the public relations division as well as implementation of team-building strategies and annual retreat.
- Founder and leader of the CBN Crisis Communication Team.
- Advised and informed CBN staff, management, president and chairman of the board on matters of concern to the news media, viewers and general public. Served as member of CBN Management Council.
- Provided national and international media relations and event strategies for 19-city food distribution campaign, 9-city launch of "The Flying Hospital," Flying Hospital medical missions to Panama, Brazil and Ecuador and international evangelism campaign called "WorldReach."
- Responsible for overall event and media relations plan for the launch of the largest Bible reading campaign in America, "The Book."
- Oversaw the public relations strategies for CBN, Operation Blessing, WorldReach, and *The 700 Club* and provided consultation on public relations matters with other CBN related entities including Founders Village, Regent University and Founders Inn.
- Founder and editor of employee newsletter.
- Provided media strategy for CBN during several crisis situations including bomb threats, protests, employee layoffs, legal matters, negative press, etc.

CHARLOTTE POLICE DEPARTMENT
Public Information Specialist

Charlotte, NC
 1985 - 1992

- Supervised the Public Information Bureau of the largest police department in the two Carolinas. Supervised one employee.
- Maintained communications program including media relations, printed materials, speakers bureau, community relations and employee newsletter.
- Advised the police chief and his staff on public and media relations matters.
- Provided crisis communications and acted as primary spokesperson for news events including death of officers, drug raids, hurricanes, protest marches, major traffic accidents, homicides, and hostage situations.
- Gave speeches to community groups and coordinated and supervised special events for the department including retiree parties, promotion and award ceremonies and

- National Police Week.
- Instructed media relations courses to police officers.

SOUTHWOOD CORPORATION
Public Relations Director

Charlotte, NC
 1984 - 1985

- Developed the company's first Public Relations Department.
- Edited corporate newsletter and wrote news releases and feature stories for national publications.
- Responsible for media relations and internal communications.

LIFEGUARD CORPORATION
Public Relations Director

Charlotte, NC
 1983 - 1984

- Developed the company's first Public Relations Department.
- Gave speeches and represented the company at health conventions.
- Edited health newsletter and responsible for media relations.

CIRCUS WORLD THEME PARK
Promotions Manager
Public Relations & Publicity Coordinator

Orlando, FL
 1983
 1981 - 1983

- Responsible for all in-house and agency promotions within the Marketing Division.
- Supervised a staff of three.
- Planned and supervised all special events including grand opening of Orlando International Airport, Soap Opera Circus, off-property performances, promotional clown appearances and community promotions.
- Gave speeches to community groups in surrounding cities.
- Media spokesperson for theme park and wrote news releases, feature stories and edited employee newsletter.

LAKELAND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
Recreation Supervisor II

Lakeland, FL
 1979 - 1981

- Directed leisure programming and special events as recreation supervisor.
- Coordinated all public relations and publicity for the Lakeland Recreation Department.

**UNIVERSITY
 COURSES
 TAUGHT**

- Fundamentals of Human Communication
- Principles of Public Relations (developed this course)
- Internship Seminar (developed this course)
- P-APR Preparation (developed this course)
- Public Speaking
- Writing for the Media
- Principles of Advertising
- Public Relations Writing (developed this course)
- Public Relations Planning & Management
- Event Management (developed this course)
- Media Relations (developed this course)
- Crisis Communication (developed this course)
- Communication Internship
- Bateman Competition (developed this course)
- Cross Cultural Seminar
- International Public Relations (developed this course)
- Freshmen Gateway
- Interpersonal Communication (developed this course)
- Christianity and Public Relations (developed this course)

PRESENTATIONS

- Speaker for "A Day in the Life of A Strengths-Based Campus" at Lee (February 15, 2013).
- Served on Media Panel for the Cleveland Media Association Fall Seminar (Oct. 2011).
- Led discussion on Lee's Strength program at the Strengths Educators Conference in San Diego, CA. (Spring 2010)
- Speaker at the Lee University and Gallup Organization Compass Award Luncheon for Excellence in Strengths (September 23, 2010).
- Speaker for Minding Your Own Business (MYOB) professional organization: *Conducting Research* (November 12, 2008).
- Panel Participant with PRSA Educator's Academy at PRSA National Conference, Detroit, Michigan, (October 25-28, 2008). Title: *Making an Educated Decision to Become an Educator*.
- Presentation to Cleveland Media Association: *How do you measure up? Research you can use to show your boss the value of public relations* (May 2, 2008).
- Presentation to Lookout Chapter of PRSA: *How do you measure up? Research you can use to show your boss the value of public relations* (March 19, 2008)
- Panel participant with PRSA Educator's Academy at PRSA National Conference, Philadelphia, PA (October 20-23, 2007). Title: *Making an Educated Decision to Become an Educator*.
- Scholar-To-Scholar poster session presenter at Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC), Washington, D.C. (August 8-12, 2007). Title: *Persuasion Strategies, Motivational Factors and Obstacles: Influences in the Evolutional Transition from Public Relations Practitioner to Professor*.
- Speaker for MYOB (Minding Your Own Business) professional luncheon: *Media Relations 101 for the Small Business Entrepreneur* (June 8, 2005).
- Presenter at Second Annual Conference of Faith and Communication, Campbell University, Buies Creek, NC (May 20-21, 2005). Title: *"Communication Students' Perceptions of Integration of Faith and Learning in College as Preparation for Integration of Faith in the Workplace"* (co-authored with Greg Rumsey)."
- Career Awareness Days presenter at Lee University. Title: *Marketing Yourself* (April 21, 2004).
- Media Relations Panel participant for Lookout Chapter of PRSA Professional Seminar (October 17, 2001).
- Workshop speaker for Celebration 2000 at Lee University (November 3, 2000).

PUBLICATIONS

- Authored article for PRSA Strategist magazine: *Help Wanted in the Classrooms: Leaders, Influencers and Great Minds* (Spring 2008).
- Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (May 2007). Title: *Persuasion Strategies, Motivational Factors and Obstacles: Influences in the Evolutional Transition form Public Relations Practitioner to Professor.*"
- Research paper selected by conference attendees to appear in "Selected Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of Faith and Communication May 20-21, 2005." Title: *"Communication Students' Perceptions of Integration of Faith and Learning in College as Preparation for Integration of Faith in the Workplace."*

ADDITIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCES

- Instructor for NC Justice Academy for four years. Taught four-hour block of instruction for "Media Relations for Law Enforcement Managers" class.
- Instructor for two seminars on "Crisis Communications" for United Way.
- Taught "Media Survival" and other public relations classes to police recruits and senior police officers for six years.
- Taught segment on "Crisis Communications" to a graduate level class called Managing Media Relations.
- High school Health and Physical Education teacher for one year.
- Taught training classes to employees of Walt Disney World for two years.
- Taught a course on "Publicity and Your Church" at a church conference.
- Teacher for two years for a single adult class at First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Former board member, secretary, accreditation chair (twice) and assembly delegate and programming committee for Lookout Chapter of Public Relations Society of America (2001-2015).
- Member of PRSA 1983 -1992 and 1994 - present. Served for two years as a Board Member for Hampton Roads (Va.) Chapter of PRSA and four years as Board Member for Lookout Chapter of PRSA (Chattanooga).
- Member of PRSA Educators Academy. Serving as Co-Chair for Strategic Planning Committee (2009).
- Served as member of Communications Board for Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce.
- President of Cleveland Media Association (1 year), Past President (1 year), Vice President (2 years) and Treasurer (1 year).
- Served on Communications Board, Speakers Bureau, Special Events Committee and Agency Communications Committee for United Way (1986 -1992).
- Member of National Religious Broadcasters Association for five years.
- American Red Cross Leadership Council
- Serve on Board of Trustees for Tennessee Christian Preparatory School (2016-present)

ACCREDITATIONS

- Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by The Universal Accreditation Program, managed by the Public Relations Society of America.

AWARDS & HONORS

- Cleveland Media Association Excellence in Communication Award (2015)
- Lookout Chapter of PRSA Peer Award for *Outstanding Mentor* (2013)
- Was asked by PRSA National Educational Affairs Committee to serve on an accreditation team for Eastern Kentucky's application for recertification (CEPR) of their public relations program (Spring 2012).
- Selected as a special "Woman of Lee" by the Diversity Committee (March 11, 2010).
- Heritage Donor Certificate of Appreciation for 15-24 years of contributions to United Way.
- Received "Implementation Award" by Gallup Organization for outstanding usage of the StrengthsFinders program in public relations classes (2007).
- Recipient of Appalachian College Association Jean Ritchie Fellowship to complete Ph.D. dissertation during academic year 2006-2007.
- Selected for three years, 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2004-2005, as the Outstanding Faculty Advisor for Communication & the Arts Department at Lee University.
- Selected in 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 to *Who's Who in American College & University Teachers*.
- Nominated for PRSA Outstanding Educator Award by local PRSA Chapter.
- Dean's Scholarship recipient at Regent University.
- Regent Merit Scholarship (given to top 10% of class).
- Elected to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities* (1993).
- Elected to *Who's Who Among American Universities and Colleges* (1974).